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Improving the Reading Level of Middle School English Learners in English Language Development Classes.

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University of San Francisco

**Improving the Reading Level of
Middle School Learners
in English Language Development Classes**

A Field Project Proposal Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

by
Anastasiia Mixcoatl-Martinez
May 2017

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MASTER OF ARTS

in

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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May 2017

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Instructor

Date

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ABSTRACT

The population of English Language learners (ELLs) is constantly growing in the United States. They attend English Language Development (ELD) classes intended to help them achieve academic proficiency in English. Learning a new language is quite a demanding process for ELLs, and it is even more challenging for them in middle school, since students not only have to get used to the structure of middle school and its environment, but also experience language and literacy difficulties. When ELLs have not become proficient in English for six years, they are considered to be long-term ELLs, meaning that they are fluent in speaking, however tend to be below their grade level in reading and writing. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to help ELD teachers increase their students' grade reading level as well as their learners' motivation and attitude toward reading and ELD classes. The project takes the form of a handbook with meaningful student-centered non-fiction reading activities that ELD teachers can use with any non-fiction text. The activities are created for different types of student work: individual, partner, and group work, which will help ELLs not only practice literacy skills, but also participate in academic discussions. Additionally, the reading activities have various structure and are designed to address multiple learning styles and multiple intelligences. After implementing the reading activities, ELD teachers will be able to guide their ELLs into meaningful student-centered discussions. Moreover, ELLs will benefit from the reading activities as well, as they find activities that their teachers use to be relevant to students' interests and lives.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Presently, there are about 2,664,921 English Language Learners (ELLs) and Fluent English Proficient (FEP) speakers in California public schools who speak a language other than English at home (CalEdFacts, 2016). Some of these students have immigrated to the United States from other countries, while others were born and have been raised in the United States. According to the California Department of Education, the vast majority of ELLs (83.5%) in California come from low-income families and speak a language other than English at home. 73% of ELLs attend English Language Development (ELD) classes kindergarten through grade six, and 27% are in these classes from grades seven through twelve, due to a different language being spoken at home (CalEdFacts, 2016). The objective of ELD classes is for students to become proficient in English, while learning content is the goal of core subject matter classes. However, due to various reasons, including the difficulty of learning content, not fully addressed EL needs in content classes, as well as incomplete correlation between ELD and content classes, the objectives of ELLs are not always met (Hill, Weston, & Hayes, 2014; Pope, 2016). According to the 2015 National Assessment of Education Statistics, ELLs tend to have more difficulties and are usually behind their peers in academic achievement, which leads to higher risks of school drop-outs (Kena, et al., 2015). For instance, in 2014, 7.6% of U.S.-born Hispanic young people did not finish high school, while 20.8 % of foreign-born Hispanic youth dropped out. Similarly, in 2014, there was a 7.1 % of U.S.-born Pacific Islander youth dropped out of high school, compared to 23.4% of foreign-born Pacific Islander youth (Kena, et al., 2016).

Learning a new language might be difficult at any age, and middle school years have proven to be especially challenging for ELLs, as they face not only their new environment, but also new language and literacy difficulties (CREATE, 2012). When a student enters middle school, they undergo key changes in “...the development of [their] brain and cognitive functioning, physical and hormonal growth, and psychological and social awareness” (California State Board of Education, 2015, p.505). In other words, elementary school students transitioning to middle school feel stressed because of biological and social changes in their lives caused by puberty (Hong, Zimmer, & Engberg, 2015). In addition, the structure of a middle school, with different periods and multiple teachers, can be very stressful for a student. Being overwhelmed with multiple changes happening in their life, some middle schoolers tend to become less engaged in their learning process (Hong, et al., 2015). Compared to their English-only speaking peers, middle school ELLs are particularly at risk to the effects of the transition into middle school. They must contend not only with these social-emotional factors, but also face the language gap in order to have a chance to achieve academic success in middle school.

Most ELLs enter middle school with a different level of English literacy skills and content knowledge (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005). Additionally, due to a number of factors, such as socio-economic status, home environment, and varied educational backgrounds, ELLs often tend to have a different level of academic vocabulary, which affects their ability to understand and analyze rigorous academic texts. Lacking academic vocabulary and not being able to comprehend academic texts, most ELLs’ reading level stagnates, and they fall behind their English-speaking peers and do not progress at their grade level

(NAEP, 2009). This leads to being less successful in disciplines such as language arts, science, history, mathematics, and other subjects that require rigorous academic reading (California State Board of Education, 2015).

As a middle school ELD teacher, most students I work with are long-term English learners. Dr. Laurie Olsen (2014) at the Sobrato Family Foundation states that long-term ELLs (LTELLs) are "...students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for six years or more, and stalled in progressing towards English proficiency without having yet reached a threshold of adequate English skills, and are struggling academically" (p.4). Their speaking skills are outstanding and many of them sound like native English speakers; nevertheless, their reading and writing skills are limited in English, which prevents them from keeping up with their grade level peers' progress. J. Dounay Zinth (2013) claims that long-term ELLs usually tend to be several years below their grade level in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, which leads to low grade point averages (GPA). It is quite difficult for language learners to read and comprehend complex texts at their grade level as well as articulate their thought and ideas in academic writing. Additionally, long-term ELD students feel less enthusiastic about ELD classes in middle school, as they do not have the option of having an elective course. Rather, they are obliged to attend an ELD class, which is considered an elective or a "support" class for them.

Motivation is a key factor in the learning process. A. E. Woolfolk (2007) states that motivation directs and maintains one's behavior and attitude. Learning a language involves both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Brown & Gonzo, 1994). H. Douglas Brown (2014) claims that only intrinsically motivated learners driven by "... internally rewarding consequences, [for example], feelings of competence and self-determination"

are most likely to achieve higher results in learning a foreign language (p.160). However, extrinsic motivation is stimulated by an outside factor, which encourages students to further their learning. Even when learners join an ELD class driven only by extrinsic motivation (e.g. exam preparation or their parent/guardian desire), personalized activities with real-life applications designed to improve students' reading level can alter their attitude to language learning and change their motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic (self-motivation). This metamorphosis is important because intrinsic motivation pushes learners to continue learning a language and become more autonomous in their learning process. Otherwise, if a learner is only driven by extrinsic motivation, their motivation and interest in the subject or target language will only last as long as the outside reward exists. Once a student passes California English Language Development Test (CELDT), they can start EL reclassification process for exiting their ELD class, even if their reading level remains below their grade level (Pope, 2016).

A teacher's role is essential in maintaining their students' intrinsic motivation, especially with long-term ELD students who have been in ELD classes since kindergarten and are not completely happy about being in ELD class instead of an elective class. Zoltan Dornyei (2001) states that motivating learners should be a priority for educators to achieve effective language learning. It is, therefore, crucial for English Language Development Teachers (ELDTs) working with ELD learners to have a handbook with reading comprehension activities that can help improve their students' reading level as well as have engaging content relevant to students' lives and interests, which could help to enhance students' motivation and lead them to successful language learning.

Overall, the number of ELL students is the fastest growing segment in California public schools. Due to an increasingly rigorous curriculum being implemented, which requires using academic vocabulary as well as high reading and writing skills, a large number of middle school ELLs have not achieved a suitable academic level of English language proficiency. Thus, these students have been designated as long-term ELLs. As a result of lagging behind their English-speaking peers and being an ELD student, ELLs become less motivated about their academic progress and getting an education, which contributes to the disproportionately high number school drop-outs among ELLs.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this field project is to help middle school ELD teachers improve their students' reading level with the help of meaningful and engaging learner-centered reading activities. Learner-centered activities are intended to increase ELLs' intrinsic motivation, engagement, and attitude towards reading and ELD classes. Designing pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities relevant to learners' lives, ages, language levels, and cultural backgrounds will help ELD teachers make their learners more engaged so that they will be able to use the language in meaningful collaborative discussions or in writing activities. When activities are meaningful and purposeful for the students, they have a positive attitude towards learning a language, which sets their affective filter low and allows more access to comprehensible language input (VanPatten, B. & Williams, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

This field project expands upon the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (TMI) and the Learning Styles model, which are aimed to help ELDTs improve their students' reading level as well as make their English learners more motivated and engaged in reading process.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, developed by Howard Gardner (1983), addresses eight various intelligences or modalities: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. Daniel Goleman (1998) elaborates the TMI and introduces emotional intelligence as process of learning fully demands on learner's emotions and attitude to the material. Each of the intelligences has its own features and skills that students use to demonstrate their learning. According to H. Gardner, intelligence is "... the capacity to respond successfully to new situations to tackle a task demanded by life (Gardner, 1983, p.8). In other words, it is essential for a teacher to take into consideration various modalities when creating activities for their learners, because some students may learn target material easier through certain modalities than others. Additionally, creating materials based on a type of learners' intelligence makes them more personalized and student-centered, which helps in increasing students' motivation (Fleetham, 2006). When activities are related to students' lives, interests, or backgrounds, learners might see their value in their own learning process, therefore become more interested and engaged in their learning. Furthermore, O. Iyitogly and H. Aydin (2015) state that reading is a cognitive process in one's brain and multiple intelligences are an essential part of the cognitive process. Therefore, keeping in mind various multiple intelligences and their

close connection with reading and learners' motivation, the handbook with reading activities for ELD students has been created.

The Learning Styles Model, closely related to the TMI, has also contributed in the development of this field project. J. Keefe defines learning styles as "... cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to learning environment" (1982). There is a significant number of learning styles models, however this project is supported by the Visual – Auditory – Read/Write- Kinesthetic model (VARK). It was developed by Neil Fleming and Colleen Mills (1992) and states that students' learning styles are based on certain sensory modalities, which are included in the intake of information. The scholars suggest that all students have their own learning style or multiple styles, which allows educators implement various techniques that best suit their learners (Pritchard, 2009). It is important for educators to consider students' learning differences when developing materials or delivering a lesson, because it would help them address various students' needs and make activities more learner-centered. Therefore, being aware of learning style preferences, empowers teachers to guide their students to more successful learning (Pritchard, 2009).

The integration of the Learning Styles Model and the Multiple Intelligences theory is a foundational principal of this project. Taking into consideration various multiple intelligences and learning styles allows teachers to address more students' needs and preferences, as well as make them more interested and engaged in the learning process. If teachers are conscious of their students' learning styles, they are more likely to

implement various teaching strategies in their lesson plans, lesson delivery, as well as when creating supplemental materials.

Significance of the Project

Increasing ELLs' intrinsic motivation as well as their reading level is the core priority of this project. After implementing target reading comprehension tasks in middle school ELD classes, ELD teachers seek to address their students' intrinsic motivation by using student-centered activities, meaningful to middle school ELLs' cultural backgrounds and interests. Furthermore, the reading materials are beneficial for ELLs as well, since they find reading activities their instructors implement to be engaging and relevant to their lives. Angela McRae and John T. Guthrie state that if reading activities in the classroom are encouraging and engaging, they motivate students to learn and make strides towards English proficiency (McRae & Guthrie, 2009).

Pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities in the handbook have also been designed to improve ELLs' reading level. Taking into consideration students' learning needs and interests as well as Common Core Standards and California ELD Standards has been a priority in selecting and structuring materials for the handbook. A positive impact this project may have is that ELD teachers can use these reading activities for various types of non-fictional texts to help their students analyze texts. According to the CA ELD Standards, middle school ELD learners should be able to "read, analyze, interpret, and create a variety of literary and informational text types" (CDE, 2014, p. 86). Furthermore, the activities will address the ELD reading standards on making

inferences, comparing and contrasting information, identifying problems and solutions, and recognizing cause and effect base on reading of non-fiction texts (CDE, 2014).

Limitations of the Project

One of the possible limitations of the project is that it is developed only for Expanding level ELD students. The California English Language Development Standards defines Expanding ELLs as those who are "... challenged to increase their English skills in more contexts and learn a greater variety of vocabulary and linguistic structures" (CDE, 2014, p. 19). At this level students are able to "... comprehend information on familiar and on some unfamiliar topics in contextualized settings" as well as "... read independently a variety of grade-appropriate text with simple sentences" (CDE, 2014, p. 21). In addition, materials developed in the project are applicable for non-fiction texts, however might be adapted for fictional texts for ELLs of higher and lower English levels.

Definition of Terms

A Long-Term ELL (LTELL): Acronym for a long-term English Language Learner. Refers to English language learners who have been enrolled in a middle school or high school in the United States for six or more years, however have not been able to reach English language proficiency (Olsen, 2014).

Standard English: Refers to a standard variety of a language, which has experienced some regularization and is considered to be "... a prestigious variety or code by a community" (Holmes, 2013, p. 78).

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The population of English language learners (ELLs) is the fastest growing population in the United States (CalEdfacts, 2016). According to California Department of Education (CDE, 2014), 73% of English learners attend English Language Development (ELD) classes when they are in kindergarten and elementary school, and only 27% are in middle school and high school. The purpose of ELD classes is to help ELLs achieve proficiency in English, while learning content in their subject area classes. Nevertheless, due to multiple reasons, such as the difficulty of material in subject area classes and not fully addressed needs of ELLs, a large number of ELLs is usually behind their English-only peers, which leads to high risks of school drop-outs (Hill, Weston, & Hayes, 2014; Kena, et al., 2015; Pope, 2016).

Learning a new language is a quite difficult period and it is especially challenging for ELLs in middle school, as they have to get used to new school structure and environment, as well as face language and literacy difficulties (Akos, 2015; CREATE, 2012). When ELLs enter middle school, they have different levels of literacy skills and content knowledge in English, which leads to be behind their English-only speaking peers (Melzer & Hamann, 2005).

When a child remains an English learner, and has not achieved English proficiency level for more than six years, they become long-term ELLs (Olsen, 2014). Being able to speak at a level of English-only peers, long-term ELLs tend to have limited skills in reading and writing, which leads to their being below grade level in both, math

and Language Arts (Dounay Zinth, 2013). Having difficulties in their content area classes and not being able to articulate their ideas and thoughts academically, as well as being a long-term ELL, makes ELLs less enthusiastic about ELD class and their education. Increasing student's motivation as well as improving their reading level is crucial for ELD teachers. When students are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to achieve higher results in their learning (Brown, 2014).

This review of the literature is divided into three sections: English language learners, middle school students and adolescent development, and motivation in an ELD classroom. Section one gives an overview and background information on ELLs, their learning characteristics and outcomes. Section two outlines literature related to middle school students and their adolescent development. Section three covers various sources on students' motivation and on English learners' motivation in particular. All three sections are supported with a subsection related to effective reading strategies for middle school English learners, which may help to increase their motivation in an ELD classroom.

English Language Learners

English learners represent a very diverse group of students. Some of them have recently immigrated from other countries; others were born in the United States, but speak a language other than English at home. All ELLs are different not only in the first language they speak, but also in culture they come from, in English proficiency level, as well as social status they belong to, and in the type of prior education they have received (Olsen, 2006). Depending on their background, researchers (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002; Himmile & Himmele, 2009; Olsen, 2006) identify several types of ELLs.

The first group includes students who are new arrivals and have received a strong academic foundation before entering the United States. They are academically fluent in their first language (L1) and are able to transfer literacy skills from their first language to the second language (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). In addition, P. Himmele and W. Himmele (2009) state that this type of ELL feels more confident when they see language that is spoken and written, due to their prior formal schooling.

On the other hand, English learners who are also identified as newly arrived or who have been in the United States for some time, yet for various reasons did not have the opportunity to develop a strong academic foundation, belong to a second type of ELL (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002). Due to insufficient prior schooling in their L1, this type of ELL experiences a number of difficulties in learning English as well as learning content area subjects in English (Himmele & Himmele, 2009).

A third type of ELL is defined as the long-term ELL (LTELL). Students who belong to this category have been living in the United States for more than seven years, or were born in the United States (Olsen, 2006). They speak a language different from English at home, and similarly to their English-only speaking peers, long-term ELLs use English for every day communication without any hesitation (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). Nevertheless, they lack proficiency in vocabulary, syntax, and grammar in both standard English and their home language. In other words, LTELLs who sound proficient have well-developed basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), however they lack cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Bolos, 2012). Furthermore, LTELLs tend to have difficulties with academic language as well as reading and writing at a grade level (Olsen, 2010). Due to rigorous academic content and not being able to process

academic texts, a large number of LEELLs tend to score low on standardized tests, which affects their academic performance (Olsen, 2010). Researchers (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Olsen, 2010; Schunk, 2003) state that there are several reasons why a large number of ELLs become and remain as LTELLs. First, some schools were not able to address the LTELLs' needs and placed them in weaker ELD programs (Olsen, 2010). Second, LTELLs tend to be fluent in conversational English and educators do not know that this type of students need linguistic help and support (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). Moreover, receiving insufficient or lack of language support make LTELLs feel discouraged about their own academic success (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Schunk, 2003). Lastly, Himmele and Himmele (2009) state that some school districts exit LTELLs from ELD classes, as they no longer need linguistic support. As a result, reclassified LTELLs are placed in mainstream classes where they do not receive extra scaffolding of the grade-level material.

All ELLs are also identified by their level of English proficiency. According to California English Language Development Standards (2014), there are three English Proficiency levels, which represent how well ELLs can comprehend and use English as they carry on improving their existing language skills. The lowest level is categorized as *Emerging*, where students learn to use English for basic needs and start learning academic vocabulary (CDE, 2014). The middle level is called Expanding and requires ELLs to improve their English language skills, as well as vocabulary and functions, in a variety of contexts (CDE, 2014). The third level is *Bridging*, which requires students to carry on learning and using "...a range of high-level English language skills in a wide

variety of contexts, including comprehension and production of highly technical texts” (CDE, 2014, p.19).

Addressing ELLs’ reading and literacy skills is essential at any level of English Proficiency. Text complexity increasing as students move from one grade to another, meaning that educators should teach specific strategies to ELLs to help them comprehend various readings (CDE, 2015). ELD teachers needs to be aware of the text and reading tasks complexity as well as their students’ backgrounds and reading skills. California Department of Education (2015) states that educators should “...support students’ meaning making by calling attention to text features and the language used in texts, bringing students back to texts to reread for different purposes, [as well as] supporting their background knowledge” (p. 515). Additionally, to check students’ understanding of reading materials, teachers should ask questions in pre reading and during reading stages, which may help students in maintaining the meaning of texts (Boardman, et al., 2008). Various question types may also help students in analyzing texts and language that is used there (CDE, 2015).

Overall, EL students come from different backgrounds and have certain needs in their academic lives in the United States. Depending on their background, here are three types of ELLs. First type of ELLs is those who had adequate level of education prior their coming to the United States. Second type is ELLs who did not have a sufficient level of education in their home country. LTELLs is students who have spent seven or more years in the United States and have been living in the United States since birth, however have not reached English language proficiency. Furthermore, there are three levels of English language proficiency: Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging, which set expectations for

ELLs and require them to continue building on their current language knowledge and skills. To help ELLs improve their reading skills and language knowledge educators may follow several techniques, such as meaning making when reading complex texts, as well as asking question in pre-reading and during-reading activities.

Middle School Students

Middle school is a period of time when elementary school students undergo various changes in their physical, psychological, cognitive, and social development (CDE, 2015). P. Akos (2005) states that middle schoolers experience accelerated physical development in their height, weight, body size, and other puberty changes. Physical and hormonal changes make young adolescents more concerned about their appearance and what others think about them.

Middle grade students go through psychological changes in their behavior; they tend to be more unpredictable and inconsistent (CDE, 2015). Due to hormonal changes, young adolescents may have exaggerated emotions and appear to be easily offended and sensitive to any kind of criticism (Damon & Lerner, 2008). Moreover, middle schoolers become extremely interested in their own identity. Erickson (1968) defines middle school time as the period of industry and identity. Industry is described as developing competence, meaning that middle schoolers learn by exploring and discovering their new abilities and qualities (Akos, 2005). Making choices is an important part of adolescent identity development. Akos (2005) states that young adolescents desire to make their own autonomous choices and be less dependent on their parents. Making a choice might be difficult task for middle schoolers, as they make not only choices in their family or

among friends, but they also must make academic choices, for example, when choosing electives or thinking about their future career choice (Akos, Konold, & Niles, 2004). Additionally, young adolescents have a strong feeling of fairness in relationship, which makes them more idealistic in their relationships at home.

Transitioning from childhood to adolescence also has social development consequences. Young adolescents tend to be rebellious in their families, however they still strongly depend on the values in their family (CDE, 2015). Furthermore, they want to feel and know that their parents or carrying adults love and accept them, meaning that they need constant support. On the other hand, young adolescents tend to challenge authorities and test boundaries of acceptable behavior, both at home and at school (Akos, 2005).

Another change adolescent students go through is the structure of middle school including multiple teachers and different groups of classmates. According to California Department of Education (2015), middle schoolers should be able to use academic vocabulary, express their point of view in both, writing and speaking, as well as comprehend and make meaning of complex texts. Reading level as well as reading comprehension standards follow a student from kindergarten through high school. When ELLs come to middle school, they have a broad range of the first language and second language literacy level and educational backgrounds (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005). Some middle schoolers are forced to learn how to read and write in English for their first time, while others continue "... building [their] second language literacy skills" (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005, p. 6). The process of acquiring reading skills in the second language is closely related to the process of acquiring reading skills in students' first language

(Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, & Rivera, 2006). Similar to their English-only speaking peers, ELLs look up to their teachers as their mentors and those who would guide and help them not only in building content knowledge but also in mastering their language skills (CDE, 2015). Therefore, it is essential for ELD teachers to use various strategies when teaching reading comprehension to address students' needs with different reading levels, which can help improve students' literacy skills. T. Underwood and P. Pearson (2004) suggest that educators should teach explicitly how to use active reading strategies, for instance, using graphic organizers to deconstruct a text and process it better. Tercanlioglu (2004) identifies active reading strategies as particular learners' actions, steps, and behaviors on how to improve their reading comprehension. J. Fletcher (2013) supports this idea and considers explicit teaching of active reading strategies to be a way, which should always be considered in the learning process. Introducing and practicing metacognitive strategies, where students make connection between new material and their prior knowledge, may also help in improving ELL's reading comprehension (CDE, 2015).

In summary, during the middle school years, young adolescents experience a period of multiple changes. They go through not only physical, psychological, cognitive, and social development, but also must adjust to the structure of a middle school. This period is especially critical for ELLs because they enter middle school with a different level of English literacy skills and content knowledge. In order to help ELLs improve their reading level and literacy skills, educators should implement active reading strategies, designed to develop independent readers.

Motivation

Motivation is a key catalyst in the learning process that “... elucidate[s] the existence and effects of learning and accordingly of the learning action” (Okon, 2014, p.6). There are two main types of learning motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. E. Deci, R. Koestner and R. Ryan (2001) define intrinsic motivation, or self-motivation, as an effort that does not require any kind of a reward; only the process is important. According to Reynolds and Miller (2003), intrinsic motivation consists of three components: beliefs of a person’s ability to complete a task, value and importance of a task, as well as emotional reaction and attitude to a task. In other words, a student who is intrinsically motivated does not expect an outside reward; they are led by their inner rewarding consequences, such as feeling of self-achievement and self-determination (Brown, 2014). For example, if a student enjoys the topic or material presented in their class, they would be more interested in the topic and more motivated to learn more about the class. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is based on an external reward or punishment, which drives a learner’s interest (Okon, 2014). Additionally, extrinsic motivation is based on learning strategies and techniques, meaning that it does not include “...factual knowledge, but the comprehension of the item” (Okon, 2014, p.8). For example, if a student takes a class to only pass an exam, they most likely would not want to continue learning after passing the exam. However, if a student takes a class driven only by extrinsic motivation and is enjoying the class, they might increase their desire to further their learning. In other words, there would be a shift from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation.

Learners’ motivation is closely related to different learning styles, meaning that different people learn and process information in different ways (Pashler, Mcdaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2009). According to the Visual – Auditory – Read/Write- Kinesthetic

model (VARK), developed by Neil Fleming and Colleen Mills (1992), there are visual learners, who prefer working with graphs, charts, pictures, and other visual tools. Aural/auditory learners may benefit from discussions, conversations, and debates, while read/write learners prefer using textbooks, reading books, and other printed materials. Conversely, kinesthetic learners may find roles plays and field trips beneficial for their learning style. N. Othman and M. Amiruddin (2010) proved that using the VARK learning style model promotes students' understanding of learning, material as well as their motivation. In other words, if a lesson is developed considering various types of learning styles, students tend to be more engaged in the learning process (Okon, 2014).

Motivation is essential in language learning and building literacy skills. Middle school ELLs who struggle in their mainstream classes because of rigorous content tend to be less motivated than their English-only speaking peers (CDE, 2015). To make ELLs more intrinsically motivated towards reading, teachers should show their own commitment to their learners' comprehension, making less focus on test results (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Z. Dornyei (2001) agrees and states that teacher's behavior is the first step to their learner's motivation. In other words, if an educator is interested in their students' success and interest in the subject or a certain subject area, they may use various tools to make their learners interested and engaged. Z. Dornyei (2001) considers classroom climate and atmosphere to be an essential factor that influences learners' motivation. If a classroom atmosphere promotes engaging learning and is free of anxiety, it sets students' affective filter low and helps them process material better (Krashen, 1985). Furthermore, classroom activities are crucial in building learners' motivation. Z. Dornyei (2001) considers presentation of any activity to be important at any stage of a

lesson, because it accomplishes the following functions: introduces the purpose of an upcoming activity, learners' anticipation, as well as the strategies that are required for completing the activity. In other words, making a personal connection to students' lives and interests when introducing activities might increase their intrinsic motivation and interest in the further activities (Okon, 2014).

M. Kosanovich, D. Reed, and D. Miller (2010) state that in order to make learners more interested in reading and to increase their reading level, it is essential to teach them active reading strategies, which may help make them responsible for their own comprehension. In addition, active readers are able to build connections between new information and their prior knowledge (Boardman, et al., 2008). When ELLs are able to use their background knowledge, they feel more confident and positive about a text (McNeil, 2011). C. Rothenberg and D. Fisher (2007) also suggest stimulating learners' content knowledge before introducing the text so that they would be more prepared for the upcoming reading activities. Moreover, pre-reading speaking activities, related to students' lives and backgrounds may help in establishing learners' motivation for further reading activities (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). S. Vardell, M. Hadaway, and T. Young (2006) consider reading materials to be a very important part that determines learners' motivation. When materials are at the learners' reading level or slightly above, they may find it more comprehensible for them (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006). Also, when reading materials have visuals, English learners may find them helpful in building their content knowledge about the subject, which may make them more engaged in further reading and post-reading activities (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002).

Overall, motivation plays a significant part in students' learning process. There are two types of learner motivation: intrinsic, or self-motivation, and extrinsic, motivation coming from external sources. In order to help ELLs improve their reading level and literacy skills, educators should build positive classroom atmosphere and student-centered activities, which would increase their motivation and interest to reading. Also, teaching active reading strategies to ELLs, aimed to make students responsible for their own reading, may help in increasing students' intrinsic motivation, as well as improving their reading level.

Summary

This review of the literature outlines the following sections: English language learners, middle school students and young adolescent development, as well as students' motivation in an ELD classroom. Moreover, each of the sections is supported by effective reading strategies, which ELD teachers may utilize to increase their students' reading level. The findings of the review of the literature provide theoretical base that in order to increase middle school ELL's reading level and motivation, ELD teachers should be provided with a handbook that contains reading comprehension activities with engaging content relevant to students' lives, backgrounds, and interests. When activities are meaningful and engaging, students are more interested and responsive to them. In addition, the review of the literature indicated that in order to create meaningful and engaging activities, middle school students' backgrounds, cultures, and interests should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the review of the literature outlined multiple studies on learner's motivation and its importance in language learning and literacy skills.

The findings of the review of the literature suggest that in order to make ELLs more interested in reading, as well as increase their reading level, educators should implement active reading strategies in their ELD classes, which are aimed to make learners more responsible for their own reading.

CHAPTER III THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Brief Description of the Project

The project takes the form of a handbook for middle school ELD teachers who seek to improve their learners' reading level with the help of meaningful student-centered non-fiction reading activities. The activities are created for Expanding level ELD students, however, they can be modified for students with higher level of English proficiency. The handbook starts with an introductory page providing an overview of the book and answering possible questions that may be raised about the content.

The handbook contains 10 reading activities, aligned with the Common Core Standards and accompanied by teacher's notes and three worksheets. Each teacher's page outlines the purpose of each activity, provides key definitions, as well as gives suggestions and recommendations on how to apply the worksheets. The worksheets are created for individual, partner, and group work so that students can not only practice literacy skills, but also develop academic discussions. The worksheets have a variety of structures and tasks that address multiple learning styles and multiple intelligences. Creating student-centered activities, which correspond with their interests, learning styles, and multiple intelligences may help ELD teachers increase their students' intrinsic motivation.

The handbook is designed to accompany any non-fiction text, therefore reading texts have not been provided. However, a list of possible reading resources is outlined in the final section of the handbook, which gives an opportunity for ELD teachers to choose resources that are applicable and relevant to their students. The handbook does not

contain answer keys, as answers may vary depending on a reading text and students' responses.

Development of the Project

As a middle school ELD instructor, I work with various levels of ELLs. Most of my students are long-term ELLs, meaning that their speaking skills are advanced, however, their reading level and literacy skills require more improvement. To help my learners practice their reading skills, they were placed in several reading groups depending on their reading and lexile levels. In their reading groups, ELLs were targeted to work not only on their reading skills practice, but also to improve their reading comprehension by addressing Common Core Standards. The idea of creating a handbook for ELD teachers with various non-fiction comprehension activities was evolved after I was not able to find a source with a set of comprehension activities for any non-fiction text which would address the needs of ELD students who were reading below their grade level.

At the beginning stages of the project development, my primary goal was to consider the needs of middle school ELD students who were below their grade reading level. Then, I identified ten most common reading comprehension topics by reviewing Common Core Standards and California ELD reading standards. Next, each of the reading comprehension topics was selected to have three handouts so that ELD teachers can use them as pre-reading, during-reading, or post-reading activities. The main idea of each activity was not only to practice reading comprehension, but also engage students in further pair or group work where ELLs can collaborate with one another while practicing

academic language and speaking in complete sentences. To make materials more appealing and engaging for middle school learners, as well as to address various types of learning styles and intelligences, I incorporated various types of activities, which include reading, writing, drawing, and moving around the classroom. Social network logos were included into these activities to make materials more attractive and relevant to middle school students' interests.

The Teacher's Notes section was created to guide ELDTs on how to use the handbook. It contains a detailed description of each activity with suggested instructions and length of each activity. As non-fiction reading materials were not included into the handbook, I provided a list of suggested reading resources where teachers can select reading materials applicable for their students' interests and reading level.

Overall, this project is my attempt to address the need for a set of reading comprehension resources that would be applicable as well as motivating for long-term ELD students, who are below their grade reading level.

The Project

The project in its entirety can be found in the appendix to this field project.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

There is great number of English language learners (ELLs) across the United States (CalEdfacts, 2016). According to Laurie Olsen (2006), ELLs account for more than a quarter of K-12 enrollment in California. Those language learners, who have not been categorized as proficient, attend English Language Development (ELD) classes focused on helping students reaching English proficiency, while learning content in subject area classes. Yet, in large numbers, ELLs tend to be behind their English-fluent peers because rigorous content in subject area classes do not completely address the needs of ELLs (Hill, Weston, & Hayes, 2014; Olsen, 2006; Pope, 2016). Not being able to be at the same academic level as their English-only peers leads ELLs to be at a higher risk of dropping-out of school (Kena. Et al., 2015).

Learning a new language tends to be challenging at any age; it is especially difficult for language learners in middle school, since they must go through not only physical, psychological, hormonal, and cognitive changes, but also face language and literacy difficulties (Akos, 2015; CREATE, 2012). Most ELLs start middle school at different levels of English proficiency and content knowledge, which makes their transition to middle school more difficult than for their English-fluent peers (Melzer & Hamman, 2005).

When an English learner has not been reclassified for more than six years, they become long-term ELLs (Olsen, 2014). Long-term ELLs tend to have outstanding speaking skills, however their reading and writing skills, as well as academic vocabulary

remain limited (Dounay Zinth, 2013; Olsen, 2014). Due to limited academic skills, long-term ELLs have difficulties in content area classes, which makes them less enthusiastic about learning English and their education correspondingly. Increasing ELLs' academic motivation as well as improving their literacy skills is highly important for ELD teachers. When students feel enthusiastic and motivated about their learning process, they tend to reach higher results in their learning (Brown, 2014).

The purpose of this field project was to help middle school ELD teachers increase their learners' reading level through the handbook with meaningful and engaging student-centered reading activities. Student-centered activities in the handbook were designed to foster ELLs's intrinsic motivation and positive attitude toward reading and ELD classes through meaningful collaborative work and writing activities.

The significance of the project is rooted in the fact that it targets increasing English learners' intrinsic motivation as well as their grade reading level. Therefore, reading comprehension activities in the handbook might be beneficial for both, ELD teachers and ELLs. After incorporating reading comprehension activities, ELD teachers will be able to engage their learners in meaningful collaborative discussions that are relevant to students' cultural backgrounds and interests. In addition, the activities in the handbook might also be beneficial for ELLs, as they may find activities encouraging and relevant to their interests and lives. Furthermore, the activities were designed to increase ELL's grade reading level. Taking into account Common Core Standards and California ELD Standards as well as needs and interests of middle school learners was a priority in structuring reading comprehension activities in the handbook. The handbook might also

be beneficial for ELD teachers, as they can use it with a variety of non-fictional texts to help their learners comprehend and analyze texts in depth.

Recommendations

The primary goal of the handbook is to help middle school ELD teachers increase their English learners' reading level through meaningful and interactive reading activities. The handbook is not intended to substitute the main course book that ELD teachers use with their students on a regular basis. Rather, it should be used when students work on an activity addressing reading standards. The author suggests that educators take into account their ELLs' reading level, age, cultural backgrounds, and interests when they look for reading materials for their learners. If materials are engaging and relevant to students' lives, they may be more interested and motivated in further working with reading activities. Additionally, the author recommends ELD teachers first read the Teacher's notes section to each reading activity before implementing them with ELD students. The Teacher's Notes guides students to work collaboratively, so that they can exchange their answers, share their opinion, and practice academic discussions in pairs or small groups. The author also advises ELD teachers to introduce academic discussions language because students tend not to be familiar with it. In order to promote productive academic discussions, where every student is involved, ELD teachers should teach the language of academic discussions first, then practice it, and set the expectation for students to use it when they work with a partner or in a group.

As the handbook materials have been created for ELD teachers to use in their classrooms, the author suggests that several ELD teachers from the same middle school

or school district pilot the materials with their ELLs, and then give their feedback on the materials and their applicability in their classrooms. ELDTs can also share what kind of non-fiction texts were used with the materials and how their students responded to them. In addition, ELDTs can contact the author with their suggestions and recommendations for further improvement of the handbook.

Currently, the handbook is available in electronic and paper format, however it is intended to be uploaded to the Teacherspayteachers.com website so that it might receive more feedback on the applicability and usefulness of the materials for ELD learners.

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APPENDIX

Reading in Mind

APPENDIX



reading activities for non-fiction

READING

I N M I N D



anastasiia m. martinez

Contents

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Introduction

Welcome to Reading in Mind!

Are you an ELD teacher? Are your students struggling with their reading?

This handbook is designed for you to help improve your students' reading level and comprehension.

What do I need to know before I use the book?

Before you use Reading in Mind, you need to have a set of non-fiction texts for Expanding level ELD students or you can use a suggested list of reading resources at the end of the handbook (see p. 46).

How can I use the activities from the handbook?

Activities can be used for different types of work: individual work, pair work, and group work.

What do my students need to know before I give them reading activities?

Your students need to be familiar with the reading comprehension topics before they start working on the reading activities. Activating students' background knowledge or explicit teaching of the concepts would be beneficial for students' success.

Is the book only developed for Expanding level students?

No, the activities can be modified for higher level students as well.

How much preparation do the activities require?

Teacher's notes section has a detailed explanation of each activity, however you might need to make some adjustments depending on your students' level and backgrounds.

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Reading Activities Intro

This section includes various pre, during, and post reading activities, which are designed to address reading and literacy standards. Each reading activity contains teacher's notes and three student handouts to use in class.

Student handout

Main Idea/Supporting details

Read the text and identify main idea. Draw supporting details and explain how supporting details are important to the main idea.

Text _____

Main idea of the text is _____

Supporting details from the text

Explain how supporting details are important to the main idea

Teacher's notes

Sequence of Events

Goal: Students will be able to outline sequence of events when reading an informational text.

Key Definitions and teaching tips

Students need to be familiar with sequence signal words before this lesson. Teach sequence words and create a chart in your classroom, so that students can always refer to it.

Materials List

1. Timeline of a story
2. My life timeline
3. Story based on time line.

Intro: Pair- Share questions

When and where were you born?

What was the most memorable day when you were little?

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities

- Provide a biography of your students' favorite singer/ a band or provide your own autobiography, including sequence words in it.
- Students read the text in pairs or small groups.
- Students complete activities individually and then compare in pairs/groups.

Beyond: Next Step

- Students share out the stories they wrote.
- To help students analyze their own learning, ask students to explain how identifying the sequence of events helps them better understand events in the texts and why.

List of Reading Activities

| Reading activities | Function | Standards | Page |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------|
| Main Idea/Supporting details | Determine main idea and supporting details of a text. | RIT.2 | 6-9 |
| Summarizing | Write a summary of a non-fiction text including main idea and supporting details. | RIT.2. | 10-13 |
| Compare and Contrast | Compare and contrast information in non-fiction texts. | R.6. W.2,4. | 14-17 |
| Sequence of Events | Identify sequence of events in non-fiction texts. | R.6. W.2,4. RIT. 3. | 18-21 |
| Making Inferences | Make inferences and be able to cite evidence to support inferences. | RL.1. RIT.1 | 22-25 |
| Cause/Effect | Identify cause and effect in non-fiction texts, | R.6. W.2,4. RIT.3. | 26-29 |
| Author's Purpose | Determine author's purpose | RIT.8. | 30-33 |
| Making Conclusions | Draw conclusions based on information in non-fiction texts. | RIT.1. | 34-37 |
| Fact/ Opinion | Recognize the difference between facts and opinions in informational texts. | W.1. W.2,4. | 38-41 |
| Understanding the Text | Be able to create and answer comprehension questions based on a non-fiction text. | RL.2. | 42-45 |

Main Idea/Supporting details

Goal: Students will be able to identify main idea and supporting details to better understand nonfiction texts.

Key Definitions

Main Idea is what a story is mostly about..

Supporting Details give information from the text that supports main idea.

Materials List

1. Identifying main idea and completing the diagram (p.7).
2. Identifying main idea and drawing supporting details (p.8).
3. Drawing main idea and writing supporting details (p.9).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes

- Review definitions of main idea and supporting details. and effect. Ask students: How can main idea be identified in a text? (possible answer: it is usually in the first or last sentence of the first paragraph).

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 20-30 minutes

- Provide a text on a topic that is relevant to your SS' lives and interests.
- SS read the text in pairs or small reading groups.
- Go through the instructions to the handout on p.7 and remind SS that they need to underline/highlight supporting details (SD) in the text, as well. Do one SD together.
- SS work individually . Then, tell them to compare their answers in pairs.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 25-30 minutes

- Provide a text at your SS' grade reading level. Have "Popcorn read" with the class. Go through the instructions on p. 8/9. Have SS reread the text and tell them to complete the worksheet individually first. Remind SS that they need to underline/highlight supporting details (SD) in the text..
- Have students compare their answers in small groups.
- Ask several groups to share their answers

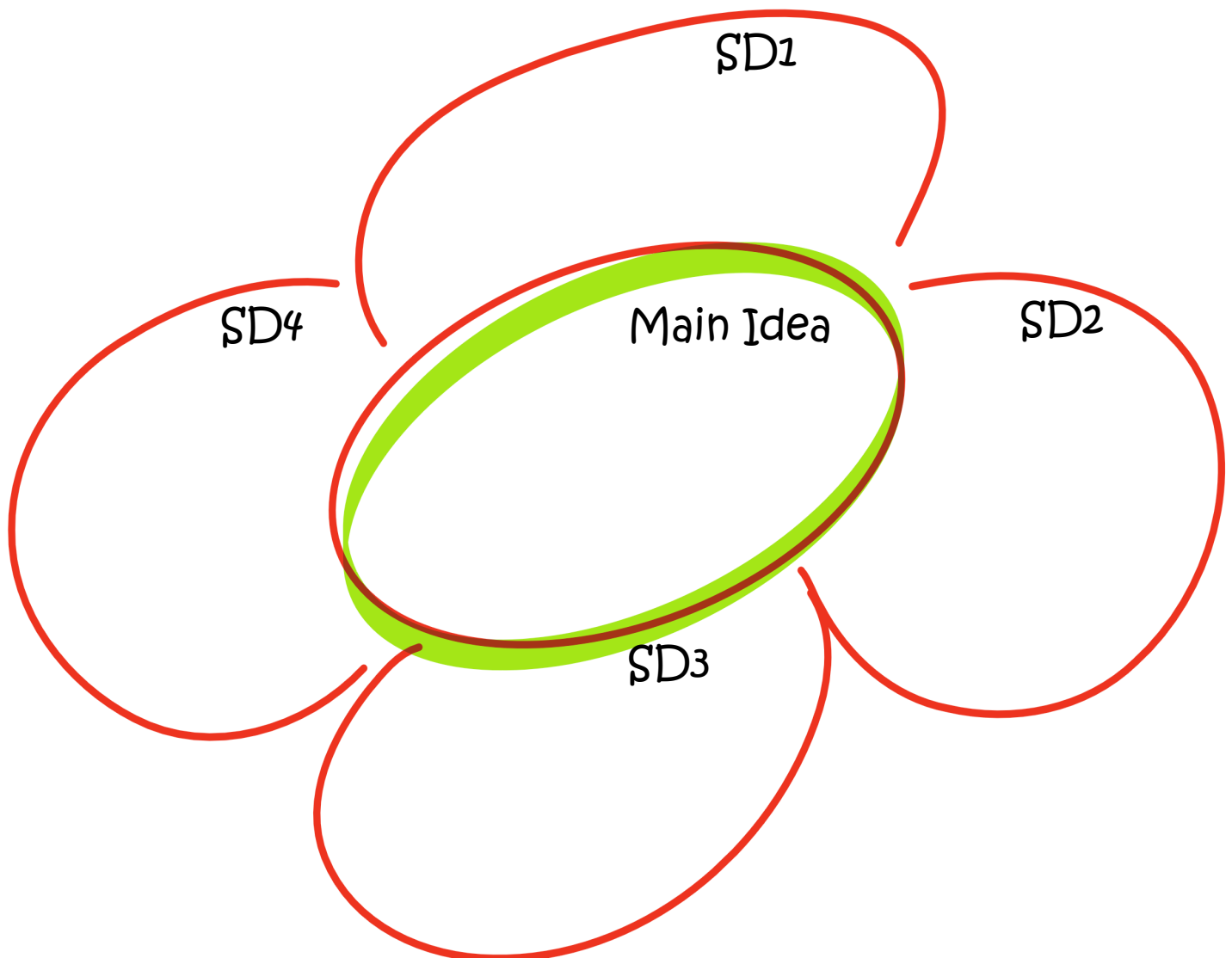
Main Idea/Supporting details

Main Idea is what a story is mostly about.

**Supporting details give information
from the text that supports main idea.**



Read the text and complete the diagram with main idea and supporting details. Use complete sentences to write your answer.



Main Idea/Supporting details



Read the text and identify main idea. Draw supporting details and explain how supporting details are important to the main idea.

Text _____

Main idea of the text is _____

Supporting details from the text

Explain how supporting details are important to the main idea

Main Idea/Supporting details

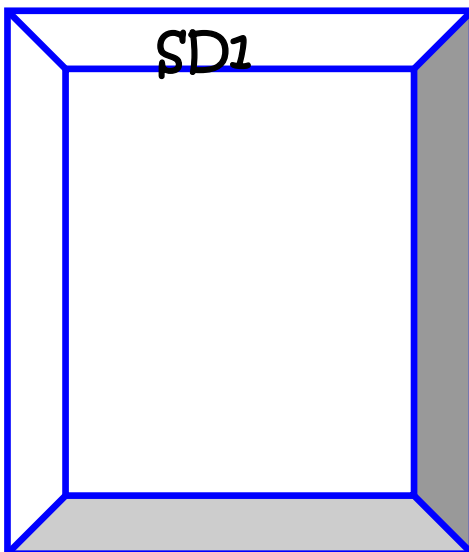
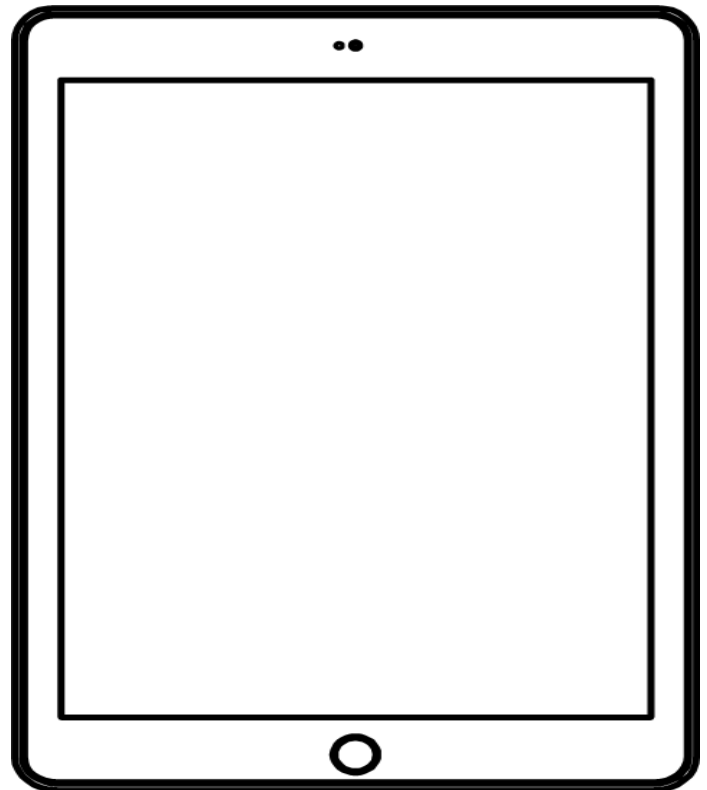


Read the text. Identify main idea, write it down, and draw it. Write supporting details.

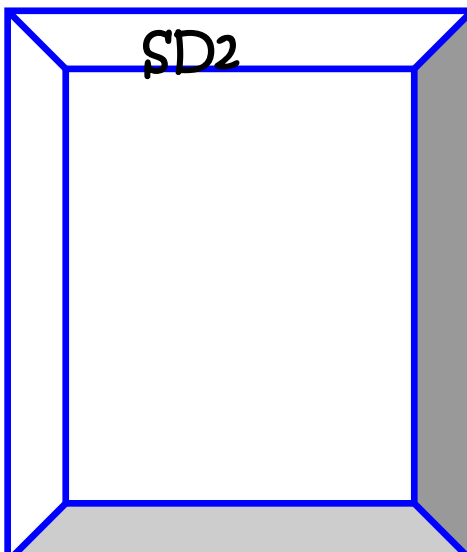
Write Main Idea

After reading the text, I consider main idea to be _____

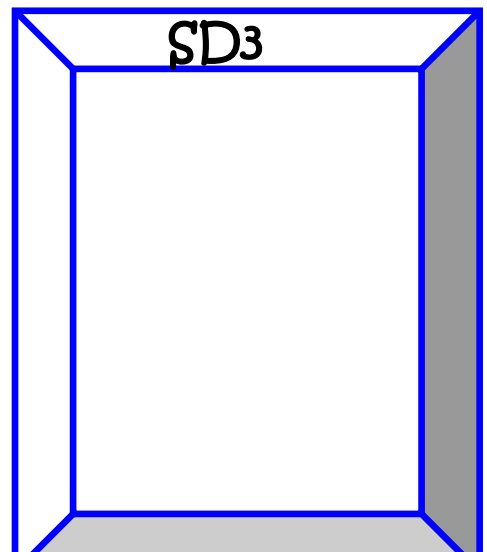
Draw Main Idea



SD1



SD2



SD3

Summarizing

Goal: Students will be able to write a summary based on a non-fiction text.

Key Definitions

Summary: a short description of the most important parts in a text.

Main idea is what a text is mostly about.

Supporting details provide supporting information about main idea.

Materials List

1. Plan and write a summary (p.11)
2. Main idea, supporting details, and summary writing (p.12).
3. Main idea, supporting details, and summary tweet (p.13).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes

- Have SS discuss important elements of a summary and how summarizing is different from retelling. Ask SS to share out their answers.

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 30-40 minutes

- Provide a text corresponding with you SS lexile level. Have SS read the text in pairs.
- Guide SS through the instructions on p.11. Tell them that they need to complete the top of the handout first, then use the top sentence as their topic sentence in their summary. Remind SS that they need to identify supporting details, underline them in the text, and then use them in their summaries. SS can work in pair and look for main idea and supporting details.
- Tell SS to write their summaries individually. When they finish, SS can read and compare their summaries.

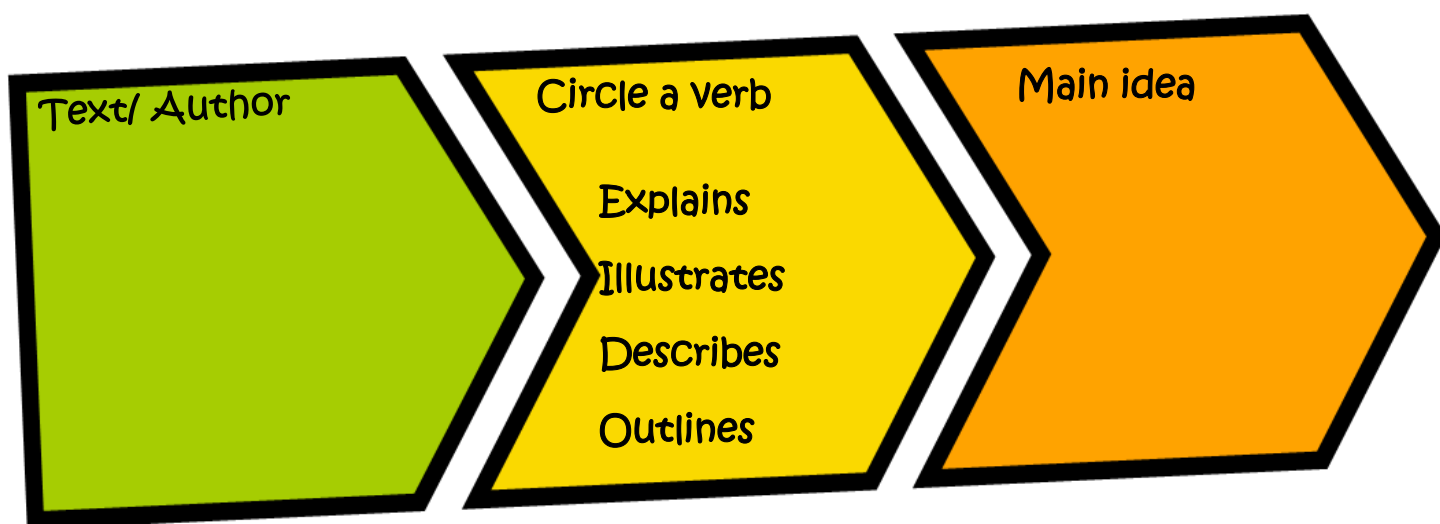
Beyond: Next Step. Time: 30-40 minutes each handout

- Provide a text corresponding with you SS lexile level. Have SS read the text in pairs.
- Guide SS through the instructions on p.12/13. Tell them that they need to complete the top of the handout first, then use the top sentence as their topic sentence in their summary. Remind SS that Instagram/ Twitter messages shouldn't be longer than 140/150 words.
- Tell SS to write their summaries individually. When they finish, put SS' work around the class. Let partners walk around the class and vote which summary they like best..

Summarizing



Read the text. Identify main idea and supporting details. Write a summary and compare it with a partner.



My summary

Summarizing



Read the text. Identify main idea and supporting details. Write a summary and compare it with a partner.

Name of the text _____

Type of the text _____

Main idea _____

SD1

SD2

SD3



Summary



Summarizing



Read the text. Identify main idea and supporting details. Write a short Twitter summary. Maximum 140 characters.

Name of the text _____

Type of the text _____

Main idea _____

SD1

SD2

SD3

Summary Tweet



Compare & Contrast

Goal: Students will be able to compare and contrast information when reading an informational text.

Key Definitions

Compare is when you find similarities between two objects.

Contrast is when you find differences between two objects.

Materials List

1. Compare and contrast 2 biographies (p.15).
2. Gallery walk (p.16).
3. Compare and contrast yourself and your partner (p.17).

Intro. Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-8 minutes.

- Show to different pictures. Have SS discuss similarities and differences. Ask SS to share out their answers. Elicit compare and contrast and vocabulary that is use with them.

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 25-30 minutes each activity

- Provide 2 biographies about your SS' favorite actor/singer/place. Split SS into Partner A and B. Partner A read biography 1 and partner B reads biography 2. Then, have SS share about what they've read. Guide them through the instruction on p.15. Have SS record their answers individually. Then, ask them to compare with their partners. Ask pairs to share out their answers.
- For worksheet on p.16, the same texts can be used. Have SS reread the texts and guide them through the instructions on p.16. Place paraphrased information from text 1 and 2 around the room. Have partners walk around the room, read information, and complete the chart. Then, have SS work in small groups and compare their answers. Have 1 reporter from each group to share their groups' answers.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 15 minutes

- Guide SS through the instructions on p. 17. Have SS work with a partner and answer the questions. Remind them to use complete sentences or provide sentence starters. Have SS complete the Venn Diagram. Then, put SS in small groups and ask them to share their answers. Ask SS to create their group Venn Diagram about similarities and differences. Have groups present their group Venn Diagrams.

Compare & Contrast

Compare is when you find similarities between two objects.

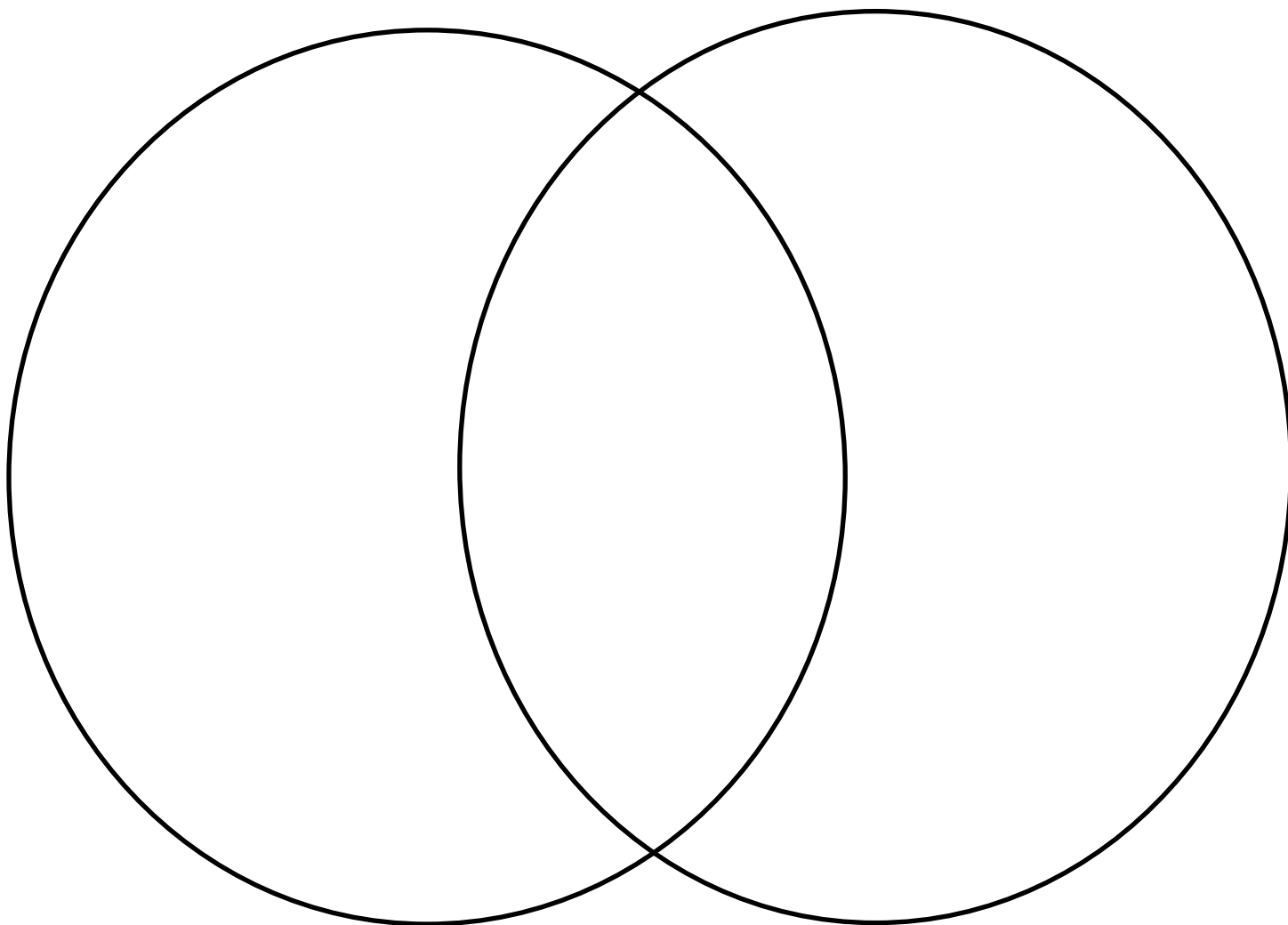
Contrast is when you find differences between two objects.



Read 2 biographies. Use the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast two personalities from the texts. When you finish, compare your answers with a partner next to you.

Text 1 _____

Text 2 _____



Write the statements in the right column below.

[illegible]

Compare & Contrast

Compare is when you find similarities between two objects.

Contrast is when you find differences between two objects.



Use the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast yourself with a partner next to you. The following questions will help you complete the diagram.

What's your favorite color?

What grade are you in?

Do you have siblings?

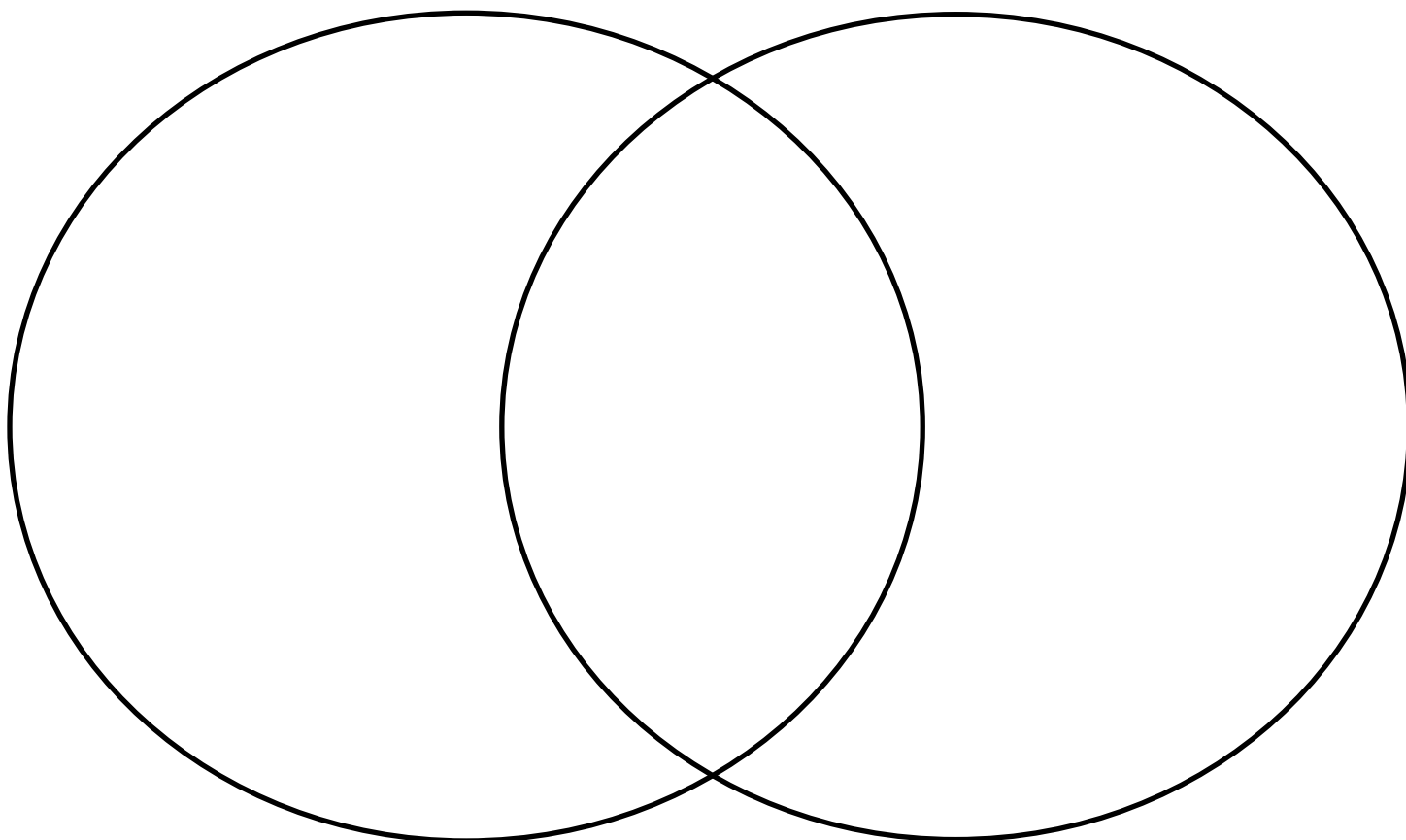
What do you do after school?

What's your favorite music?

Do you play video games?

Name _____

Partner's name _____



Sequence of Events

Goal: Students will be able to outline sequence of events when reading an informational text.

Key Definitions and teaching tips

Students need to be familiar with sequence signal words before this lesson. Teach sequence words and create a chart in your classroom, so that students can always refer to it.

Materials List

1. Timeline of a story (p.19).
2. My life timeline (p.20).
3. Story based on time line (p.21).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 3-5 minutes

Tell SS to discuss: When and where were you born? What was the most memorable day when you were little?

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time will depend on the text length.

- Provide a biography of your SS' favorite singer/band or provide your own autobiography, including sequence vocabulary in it.
- Have SS read it in small groups. Guide SS through the instructions on p.19. Have SS work individually. Then, ask them to compare their answer in groups. Remind SS to use sequence vocabulary in their answers.
- Have groups share out their answers. Listen for sequence vocabulary.

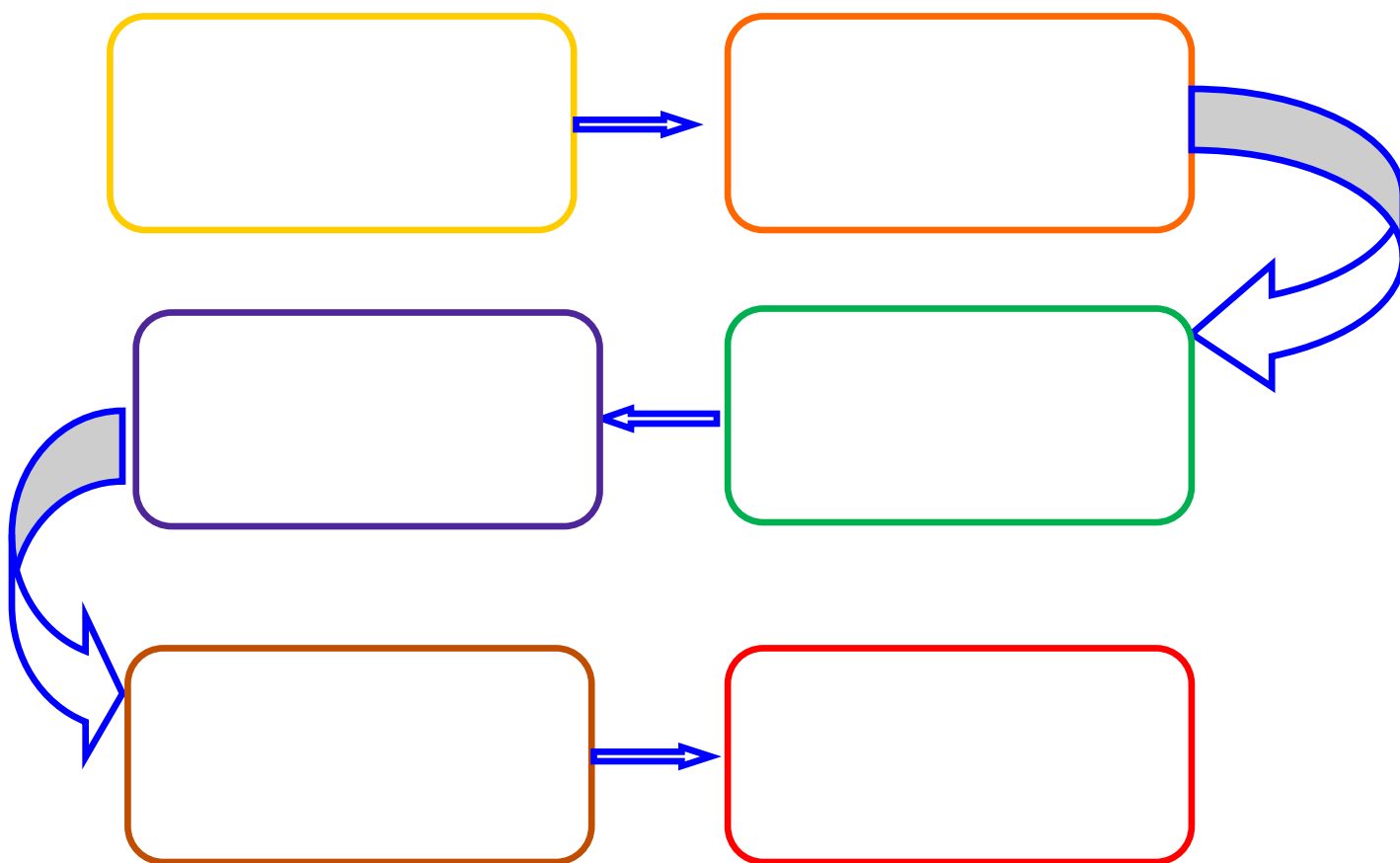
Beyond: Next Step: Time: 30-35 minutes for both handouts.

- SS create timelines of their own lives (p.20). Then, tell SS to swap handouts with a partner. Instruct SS that they need to choose 4 interesting events from their partner's timeline and create a story about events in his/her life and write it down on p.21.
- When SS finish writing, they can share their writings in small groups or share out with the whole class.

Sequence of Events


Sequence of events is the order of events in the story. When you read a story pay attention to sequence signals: *First, next, later, then, finally, and etc.*

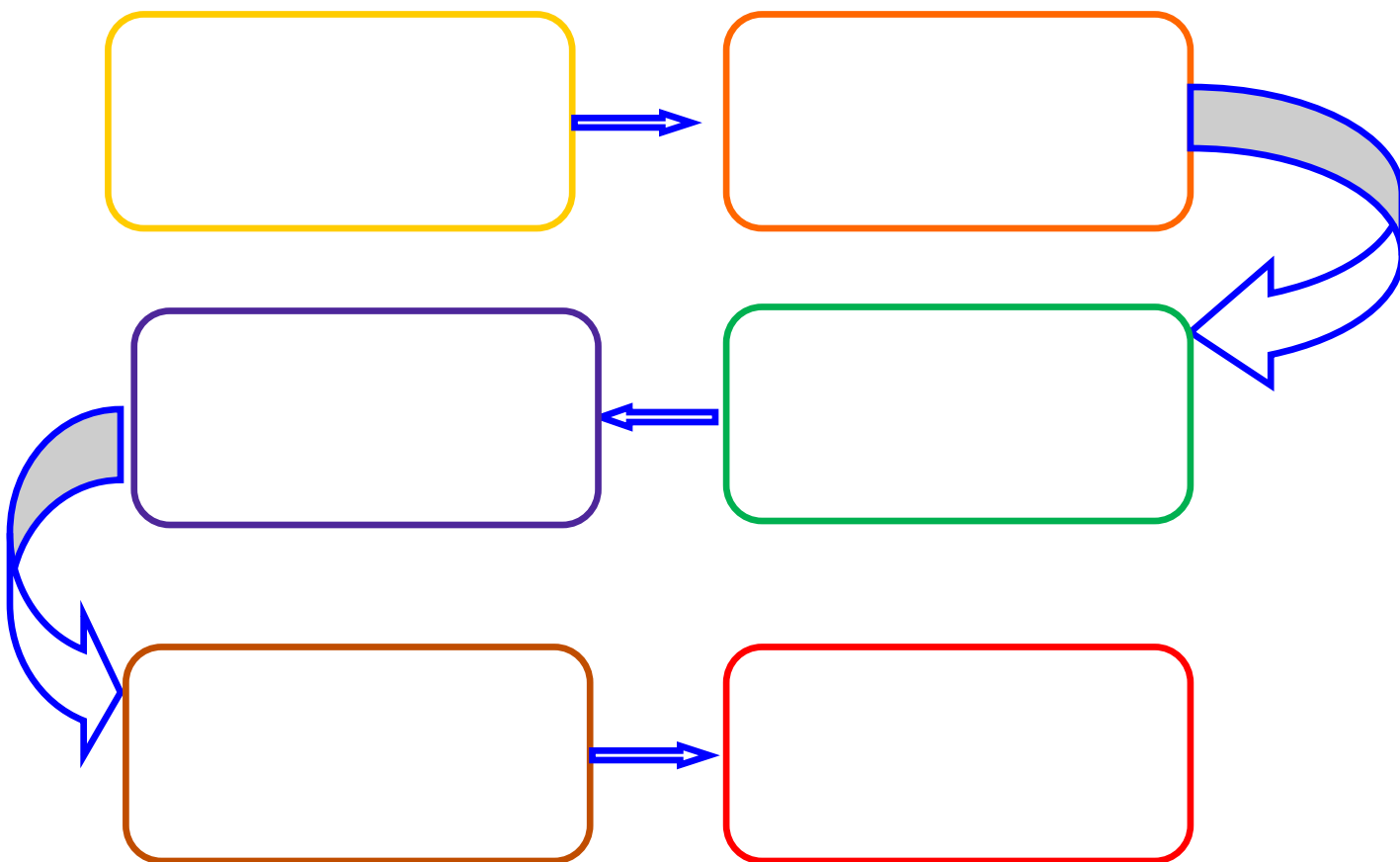
After you finish reading the story, put events from the story on the timeline. Start with the event that happened first.



Sequence of Events

Sequence of events is the order of events in the story. When you read a story pay attention to sequence signals: *First, next, later, then, finally, and etc.*

 Create a timeline of your own life. Include 6 memorable/important events in your life. Start with the event that happened first.



Sequence of Events



Use your partner's life timeline, choose 4 interesting events, and create a story about events in his/her life. Draw a picture related to the each event.

_____ 's story

First, _____

Next, _____

Then, _____

Finally, _____

Making Inferences

Goal: Students will be able to make inferences when reading non-fiction texts.

Key Definitions

Inference is similar to a prediction. Use clues from the story and your own experience to make an inference.

Materials List

1. Making inferences and completing the chart (p.23).
2. Creating an inference from the text (p.24).
3. Completing quotes and inferences from the text (p.25).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5 minutes

- Review definitions of an inference. Ask students: In what situations are inferences used? (possible answer: when we make a conclusion about something). Remind SS about the differences between inferences and conclusions.

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 20-40 minutes each activity.

- Provide an article at your SS' lexile level. Have SS read the text in pairs or small groups.
- Guide SS through the instructions on p.23. Complete 1 example of an inference with the SS. Tell SS complete activities individually and then compare in pairs/groups. Ask SS to share their partner's answers.
- After SS read the text, guide them through instructions on p.24. Explain that they need to work individually and write down quotes from the text that they think have inferences.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 20-30 minutes

- Provide a new article or have SS reread the article from the previous activity. Ask them to choose the quote that best stands out to them. Guide the SS through the instructions on p. 25. Tell SS to work individually and complete the worksheet. When they finish, have them work in small groups and share their answers.

Making Inferences

**Inference is similar to a prediction.
Use clues from the story and your
own experience to make an infer-**



Read the text and complete the chart. When you finish, work with a partner and compare your answers.

Text _____ Author _____

| Sentence from the text | What I know | My Inference |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Making Inferences



Read the text and write the quotes from the text. When you finish, swap papers with a partner. Your partner completes "My Inference" part.

Text _____ Author _____

Quote from the text

My inference

Page _____



Page _____



Page _____



Making Inferences

**Inference is similar to a prediction.
Use clues from the story and your
own experience to make an infer-**



Read the text and create an inference from the text.

Text _____ Author _____

Clues from the text

+

My own experience

My inference

I can draw my inference

Cause & Effect

Goal: Students will be able to identify cause and effect in informational texts.

Key Definitions and Teaching Tips

Pre-teach cause & effect signal words and create a chart in your classroom, so that students can refer to it. Signal words: *because, as a result, so, therefore, since, due to, consequently.*

Materials List

1. Cause & Effect Graphic Organizer (p.27).
2. Create Cause & Effect Sentences about yourself (p.28).
3. Connect Cause & Effect Sentences with a signal word (p. 29).

Intro. Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes

- Review the definitions of cause and effect. Provide several example and ask SS to discuss with their partner, which action is cause (reason) and effect (result).

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time will depend on the text length.

- Provide a text that contains cause and effect. It might be an article about current events.
- SS read the text in pairs or small reading groups.
- Go through the instructions to the handout on p.27 and remind SS that they need to find 3 effects and 1 cause. Finally, tell SS that they need to include 1 possible effect that is not in the story. SS complete the handout individually, and then compare with a partner.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 30-35 minutes

- Have SS complete 5 effects on p. 28, and then write 5 causes on their partner's worksheet.
- Instruct SS to rewrite their sentences from p.28 on p.29 using signal words.
- When SS finish, tell them to share their sentences with a partner. Their partner must listen attentively, and then write down 3 sentences from his/her partner's list.
- Tell SS to share out their partner's sentences with the class.

Another way of sharing this activity: teacher collects partner's sentences and randomly gives it to students. Students read sentences and need to guess who the sentence belongs to.

Cause & Effect

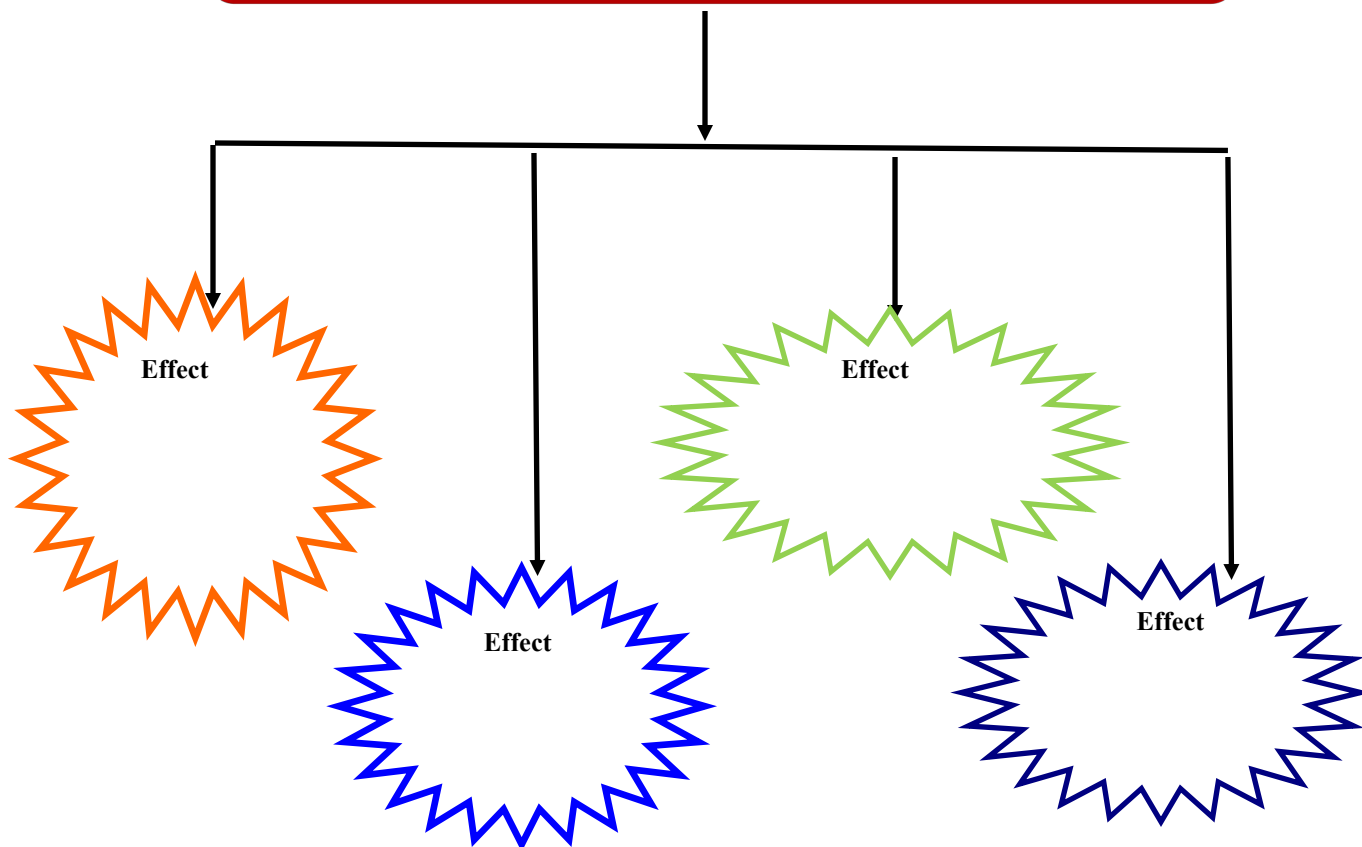
Cause is what makes something happen.

It's a reason.

Effect is what happens after. It's a result.

After you finish reading the text, find 3 effects (results) and place them in the graphic organizer. Then, include a cause (reason) that you found in the story. Finally, include one possible effect that is **NOT** mentioned in the story.

Cause:



Cause & Effect

Cause is what makes something happen.

It's a reason.

Effect is what happens after. It's a result.



Work individually and create 5 EFFECT sentences about yourself. When you finish, swap worksheets with your partner and complete the CAUSE part.

CAUSE

EFFECT

Cause & Effect

Cause is what makes something happen.

It's a reason.

Effect is what happens after. It's a result.



Work individually and rewrite the cause and effect sentences from previous activity. Use signal words from the box below to connect the sentences.

because

as a result

since

consequently

so

therefore

due to

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Work with a partner. Listen to your partner's sentences attentively and write down 3 sentences from your partner's list. Be ready to share out the sentences with class.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Author's Purpose

Goal: Students will be able to identify author's purpose when reading informational texts.

Key Definitions

Author's purpose is the reason why an author writes a certain text.

Author's Purposes: to inform, to persuade, to entertain, and to explain.

Materials List

1. Identify author's purpose after reading a text (p.31).
2. Read several texts and determine author's purpose (p.32).
3. Writing a passage. Determine author's purpose (p.33).

Intro. Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes.

- Ask students: What was the last piece of information you read? (possible answers: text message, information in the class, and etc.). Why do authors write different text ? (possible answers: to share information, tell news, and etc.).
- Review author's purposes.

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 35-40 minutes.

- Provide a text and read it with the SS paying their attention the words that might be difficult for them to read.
- Go through the instructions to the handout on p.31 and remind SS that they need to re-read the text, identify author's purpose, and explain their answer. SS complete the handout individually, and then compare with a partner.
- For p.32, provide 4 text with different purposes. Students work with a partner, read texts, identify authors' purpose, and explain their answer.
- Ask partners to share out their answers and explanations.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 20-30 minutes.

- Go through the instructions on p. 33 and remind that they need to write in complete sentences. SS write their passages individually.
- Tell SS to swap handouts with a partner, read their partner's passage, and identify the author's purpose. Remind SS that they will need to explain their answer in complete sentences.
- Ask a few pairs to share out answers with the whole class.

Author's Purpose

Author's purpose: Persuade, Inform, Explain, or Entertain.



Read the text and determine its purpose.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Main Idea: _____

The author's purpose of this text is to . . .

☐ Persuade ☐ Inform ☐ Explain ☐ Entertain

After reading the text, I conclude that . . .

Author's Purpose

Author's purpose: Persuade, Inform, Explain, or Entertain.



Work with a partner. Read the texts, determine the authors' purpose, and complete the chart.

| Text Title | Author | Author's Purpose | Explain your answer |
|------------|--------|------------------|---------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Author's Purpose



Work individually. Write a passage (2-4 sentences) on any topic that you are interested in.

Title _____



Read your partner's passage and determine author's purpose.

The author's purpose of this text is to . . .

☐ Persuade ☐ Inform ☐ Explain ☐ Entertain

After reading the text, I conclude that . . .

Making Conclusions

Goal: Students will be able to draw conclusions based on reading non-fiction texts.

Key Definitions

Making a conclusion means to come up with a new understanding about a topic/text.

Materials List

1. Making paragraph conclusions (p.35).
2. Drawing conclusions in pair/group work (p.36).
3. Drawing conclusions and explaining answers (p.37).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes.

- Ask students: What was the last piece of information you read? (possible answers: text message, information in the class, and etc.). Why do authors write different text ? (possible answers: to share information, tell news, and etc.).
- Review author's purposes.

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 20 minutes

- Provide an article that corresponds with your SS' lexile. Do "Popcorn Read" of the article. Elicit the topic of the text. Guide SS through the instructions on p. 35. Have SS work in pairs and underline information related to the topic in the text. Complete 1 conclusions with the class and tell SS to work individually on 2 more conclusions. Have SS share their answers in small groups.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 30-35 minutes

- Provide an article about a famous person that your SS like. Have SS read the article in pairs. Focus on the instructions on p.36. Provide certain paragraph numbers that you want SS to work on. Have SS work individually first, then put them in pairs to compare their answers and write down their pair conclusion. Have pairs share out their answers with the whole class.
- Provide an article about a famous person/ place that your SS like. Have SS read the article in pairs. Focus on the instructions on p.37. Provide certain paragraph numbers that you want SS to work on. SS work alone first, then have them compare their answers in small groups. Have 1 speaker from each group to report their answers.

Making Conclusions

To make a conclusion means to come up with a new understanding about a topic/text.



Read the text, underline facts in the text that give you information about the topic. Make conclusions based on your text and write them down below.

My conclusion from paragraph #_ : _____

My conclusion from paragraph #_ : _____

My conclusion from paragraph #_ : _____

Making Conclusions


To make a conclusion means to come up with a new understanding about a topic/text.



Read the text, underline facts in the text that give you information about the topic. Make conclusions based on your text and write them down in “My conclusion” column.

| My conclusion | My partner's conclusion | Our conclusion |
|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Paragraph #__: | Paragraph #__: | |
| Paragraph #__: | Paragraph #__: | |
| Paragraph #__: | Paragraph #__: | |
| Paragraph #__: | Paragraph #__: | |

Making Conclusions

 Read the text, underline facts in the text that give you information about the topic. Make conclusions based on your text and write them down below.

What can you conclude from paragraph #_ : _____

How do you know that?

What can you conclude from paragraph #_ : _____

How do you know that?

What can you conclude from paragraph #_ : _____

How do you know that?

Fact vs Opinion

Goal: Students will be able to recognize the difference between facts and opinion in informational texts.

Key Definitions

Fact is information that can be proven.

Opinion is how someone feels about something.

Materials List

1. Finding 2 facts and 1 opinion (p.39).
2. Finding facts and creating opinions (p.40).
3. Facts and opinion about yourself (p.41).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes.

- Review definitions of fact and opinion with SS. Give 1 example of a fact and an opinion. Ask students: What helped you recognize fact in this sentence? What helped you recognize an opinion?

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 30 minutes.

- Provide a text that contains facts and opinions. Guide SS through the task on p.39. Remind SS that they need to record complete sentences. SS read the text in pairs/ small groups. Then, individual complete the worksheet. Pairs/Small groups compare their answers. Ask partners to share out their answers with the class.
- Provide a text that contains facts and opinions. It can be an article about SS' favorite movie. Guide SS through the task on p.40. SS can work in pairs and look for interesting facts. Put pairs into groups and ask them to share their answers.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 25-30 minutes.

- Guide SS through the task on p.41. Tell SS to write down 3 facts and 3 opinion about themselves. Remind SS that they need to use complete sentences.
- Tell SS to work with their elbow partner and read sentences to their partner. Partner needs to guess if the information is a fact or an opinion. Before SS work in pairs, remind them to listen to their partner attentively.
- Ask some pairs to share out their answers with the whole class.

Fact vs Opinion

Fact is information that can be proven.

Opinion is how someone feels about something.



Read the text and find 2 facts and 1 opinion. Record them below.

Name of the story _____

Fact 1

Opinion

Fact 2

Fact vs Opinion

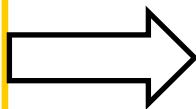
Fact is information that can be proven.

Opinion is how someone feels about something.



Read the text, find 2 interesting facts, and create 2 opinions based on the facts.

Fact # 1



Opinion # 1

Fact # 2



Opinion # 2

Fact vs Opinion



Write down 3 facts and 3 opinions about yourself. Listen to your partner's sentences and guess if they are a fact or an opinion.

1

Partner's guess _____

1

Partner's guess _____

2

Partner's guess _____

2

Partner's guess _____

3

Partner's guess _____

3

Partner's guess _____

Understanding the Text

Goal: Students will be able to create and answer comprehension questions for checking understanding of the text.

Key Definitions

Reading comprehension is the ability to read the text and understand the text.

Materials List

1. Making predictions (p.43).
2. Creating comprehension questions and answers (p.44).
3. Interviewing a person from the text (p.45).

Into: Discussion questions (no handout). Time: 5-7 minutes.

- Review types of questions with SS. Ask students: Why is it important to ask questions when we read information? (possible answer: to understand what we are reading about).

Through: Instructions for Reading Activities. Time: 30 minutes each activity.

- Provide a text related to a topic that stands out for your SS. Include 1-2 pictures.
- Before completing worksheet on p.43, read the instructions with the SS. Show the pictures from the text. Then, ask SS to make predictions about the text and record the question about the text before reading. Read the text with SS, ask them to record their questions during and after reading. Tell SS to swap handout with their partner and answer partner's questions.
- For handout on p.44, the same text can be used. Tell SS to create 3 comprehension questions based on the text. Then, ask SS to swap their worksheets with their partners. Tell SS to answer their partner's sentences using complete sentences.
- Ask SS to share out their questions and answers with the whole class.

Beyond: Next Step. Time: 20-25 minutes.

- Provide a story about your SS favorite singer, actor, or an important person in their culture. SS read the text with their partners. Then, tell them to imagine that they are going to interview a person from the story. Then, ask SS to create 3 questions related to the text that they would ask this person. After that, SS swap handouts with their partners and answer the questions.
- Ask some SS to share out their questions and answers with the whole class.

Understanding the Text



Before you start reading the text, make predictions about the reading and create 1 question about the text. Then, create a question during reading and finally after reading. Swap worksheets with your elbow partner and answer his/her questions.

Before reading the text, I am wondering...

My partner's answer:

While reading the text, I'd like to know...

My partner's answer:

After reading the text, I still have a question:

My partner's answer:

Understanding the Text



Read the text and create 3 comprehension questions related to the text. When you finish, swap worksheets with your partner, and answer his/her questions.

Comprehension Question 1: _____

Answer to Question 1: _____

Comprehension Question 2: _____

Answer to Question 2: _____

Comprehension Question 3: _____

Answer to Question 3: _____

Understanding the Text



Read the text and choose a person from your reading who you would like to interview. Create 3 questions related to the text that you would ask this person.

Question 1:

Answer 1:

Question 2:

Answer 2:

Question 3:

Answer 3:

Reading Resources

The reading websites below contain a variety of non-fiction texts for different grade reading levels.

Leveled articles/ A variety of topics for young adults

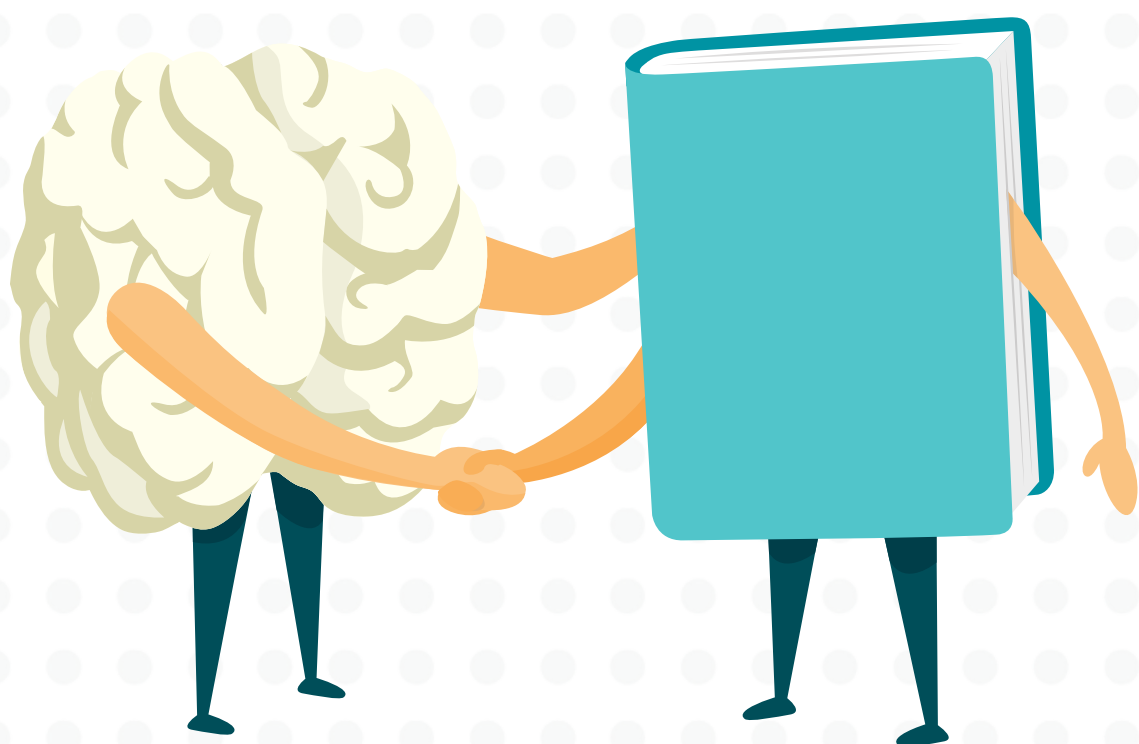
- ♦ www.commonlit.org
- ♦ www.newsela.com
- ♦ www.tweentribune.com

A variety of topics for young adults

- ♦ www.dogonews.com
- ♦ kids.nationalgeographic.com
- ♦ magazines.scholastic.com
- ♦ wondorpolis.org
- ♦ www.readworks.org
- ♦ www.si.edu
- ♦ www.timeforkids.com/news
- ♦ www.teacher.depaul.edu

Special Notes

The materials in Reading Mind are not associated with or promoted by Twitter or Instagram. The use of the Twitter and Instagram logos in the materials is approved by Twitter and Instagram for educational purposes.



The middle school years are a particularly challenging period in a young scholar's life, where they experience a number of changes. They go through changes in not only physical, psychological, cognitive, and social development, but also must adjust to the structure of a middle school. This period is especially critical for English language learners (ELLs) because they enter middle school with a different level of English literacy skills and content knowledge.

According to the CA English Language Development Standards, middle school English learners should be able to “read, analyze, interpret, and create a variety of literary and informational text types” (CDE, 2014).

In order to help ELLs improve their reading level and literacy skills, educators should implement active reading strategies, designed to develop independent readers. This handbook was designed in order to help meet our I ELL scholars's needs, and become successful, independent readers, throughout their middle school years and beyond.



Anastasiia M. Martinez has been a teacher of the English language for 8 years. She is currently teaching English language development and English language arts at a Title 1 middle school in the San Francisco Bay Area. Mrs. Martinez adores everything about golden retrievers, loves tending to her avocado trees, and strives to instill a passion for inquiry in her students.



@toolsforteachers